

Message Text

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ACTION AID-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 DHA-02 ORM-01

L-03 EB-07 AGR-05 FDRE-00 FAA-00 DOTE-00 COME-00 SS-15

NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 HEW-02 SCA-01 SCS-03

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3932

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NY

JCS WASHDC

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUANDA 1077

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF AO

SUBJECT: REFUGEES: NEW PORTUGUESE PLAN, REQUEST FOR U.S.
ASSISTANCE

1. SUMMARY. THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT RECENTLY ANNOUNCED PLANS TO REPATRIATE 270,000 WHITES TO THE METROPOLIS BY THE END OF OCTOBER. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICER IN ANGOLA IS CHARGED WITH CARRYING OUT THE PLAN. THE COORDINATOR OF THE PROGRAM HAS ASKED FOR U.S. HELP TO OBTAIN THE RELEASE OF A TAP 747 IN SEATTLE AND FOR U.S. FOOD DONATIONS TOTTALLING 500 TONS. I RECOMMEND THAT WE OFFER THE PORTUGUESE FOOD AND DISCUSS WITH THEM U.S. ASSISTANCE
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TO ENSURE THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE

OPERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. ON AUGUST 6 THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PORTUGUESE HIGH COMMISSION IN ANGOLA, LT COLONEL GONCALVES RIBEIRA, DESCRIBED TO ME THE NEW PLAN TO REPATRIATE LARGE NUMBERS OF PORTUGUESE CITIZENS BEFORE ANGOLAN INDEPENDENCE IN NOVEMBER. RIBEIRO SAID THAT ABOUT 100,000 WHITES LEFT ANGOLA BETWEEN MAY, 1974 AND MAY 1975. ANOTHER 35,000 LEFT DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE AND JULY 1975. THE NEW THREE MONTH PLAN CALLS FOR THE AIRLIFTING OF 270,000 PORTUGUESE BY THE END OF OCTOBER, SO THAT BETWEEN MAY 1974 AND OCTOBER 1975, ABOUT 400,000 PERSONS WILL HAVE BEEN TAKEN OUT OF ANGOLA. THE DETAILS OF THE NEW PLAN, AS PRESENTED BY RIBEIRO, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

3. BETWEEN AUGUST 4 AND AUGUST 10, 21 PLANES (SIX 747'S AND THE REST 707'S) WILL BE PROVIDED FOR "ADIDOS" AND "DESALOJADOS" IN LUANDA. ADIDOS ARE CIVIL SERVANTS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WHO WILL RETURN TO PORTUGAL IN HALF-PAY STATUS UNTIL OTHER ASSIGNMENTS CAN BE FOUND FOR THEM OR THEY RETIRE. DESALOJADOS ARE DISPLACED PERSONS, OR REFUGEES. THESE FLIGHTS WILL BE IN ADDITION TO TAP COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS, WHICH AT PRESENT TAKE THE EQUIVALENT EACH DAY OF ONE AND ONE-HALF 747'S. THE AUTHORITIES DO NOT EXPECT MORE THAN 4,200 PEOPLE TO GO ON THESE 21 PLANES DUE TO INITIAL CONFUSION AND LACK OF PREPARATION. ON AUGUST 11 FOUR 707 FLIGHTS DAILY WILL BEGIN TAKING REFUGEES OUT OF NOVA LISBOA. FROM AUGUST 11 TO AUGUST 17 TWO 747'S WILL TAKE ADIDOS AND DESALOJADOS OUT OF LUANDA. THE NUMBERS OF PLANES WILL GRADUALLY BE AUGMENTED UNTIL THERE ARE THREE 747'S DAILY FOR ADIDOS AND DESALOJADOS AND THREE 747 COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS.

4. ACCORDING TO RIBEIRO, ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE WITH SWISSAIR, LUFTHANSA, VARIG AND ALITALIA TO TAKE OUT THE REFUGEES. RIBEIRO LEFT FOR LISBON AUGUST 7 TO COORDINATE WITH THE AUTHORITIES THERE. DESPITE THE PRECISION OF THE NUMBERS USED BY RIBEIRO, I AM NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT PLANS ARE AS WELL SHAPED UP AS HE SUGGESTS. THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH SWISSAIR UNDER ITS PREVIOUS CONTRACT, HAVING TO DO IN PART WITH CREW CHANGES, TAP CREWS FLY DOWN AND BACK AGAIN; SWISSAIR INSISTS THAT A NEW CREW TAKE THE RETURN TRIP. IN ADDITION, TAP HAS MADE LITTLE OR NO EFFORT TO MAN ITS COUNTERS WITH ENOUGH PERSONNEL

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TO PROCESS THOSE THAT WANT TO LEAVE. PEOPLE WAIT HOURS, DAYS SOMETIMES, AT THE AIRPORT TRYING TO GET THEIR TICKETS SQUARED AWAY. WHEN I POINTED THIS OUT TO RIBEIRO, HE SAID THE PROBLEM IS NOT SO MUCH LACK OF GROUND PERSONNEL AS LACK OF PLANES. LACK OF PLANES THERE IS, BUT THE CHAOS AT THE AIRPORT IS THE DIRECT RESULT OF TAP'S UNWILLINGNESS TO STAFF UP TO MEET THE NEED. RIBEIRO POINTED OUT THAT ADIDOS AND DESALOJADOS LEAVE FROM THE AIR FORCE TERMINAL AND THERE THE PASSENGERS ORGANIZE THEMSELVES, DO MUCH OF THE

PROCESSING AND EVERYTHING MOVES IN AN ORDERLY FASHION. THE DELEGATION THAT CAME TO SEE ME DURING THE DEMONSTRATION AT THE CONSULATE GENERAL ON AUGUST 4 TOLD ME THAT REFUGEES HAD TO STAND IN LINE FOR DAYS TRYING TO REGISTER AND THAT ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THEIR MARCH WAS THEIR FRUSTRATION OVER NOT BEING ABLE TO MAKE ANY HEADWAY. I MUST CONFESS THAT THE ENTIRE OPERATION LOOKS LIKE A SLOWDOWN BY THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT. MY CRITICISM MAY BE UNFAIR, BUT THE PORTUGUESE ARE JUST NOT PUTTING IN THE HUMAN RESOURCES NEEDED TO DO THE JOB. AS FOR THE NEW PLAN, THE SIX FLIGHTS DAILY OF 747'S AND FOUR OF 707'S DOES INDEED GIVE US A THEORETICAL TOTAL OF 3,000 PERSONS A DAY, 90,000 A MONTH, 270,000 IN THREE MONTHS, BUT TIME IS SLIPPING AWAY AND WE STILL HAVE SEEN NO HARD EVIDENCE OF A REAL PUSH BY THE GOP. EVEN IF THE WILL WERE THERE, GROUND SUPPORT FACILITIES AT LUANDA AND NOVA LISBOA ARE SUCH THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO DO THE JOB. MANY KEY TECHNICIANS HAVE GONE AND UNLESS OTHERS ARE BROUGHT DOWN FROM PORTUGAL UNDER CONTRACT THE NEW PLAN WILL OPERATE UNDER A DISTINCT HANDICAP.

5. RIBEIRO MADE TWO SPECIFIC REQUESTS OF THE USG. FIRST, TO HELP OBTAIN THE RELEASE OF A NEW 747 THAT TAP HAS PURCHASED, BUT WHICH IS BEING HELD IN SEATTLE BECAUSE OF SOME PROBLEM WITH WHICH HE IS NOT FAMILIAR. THIS PLANE REPRESENTS THE FOURTH 747 IN THE TAP FLEET AND WOULD BE OF ENORMOUS HELP IF IT COULD BE PUT INTO SERVICE.

6. RIBEIRO ALSO ASKED THAT THE USG SUPPLY 500 TONS OF FOOD. HE SAID THAT THE ABILITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT ARE LIMITED AND THAT OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED. SOME 25,000 REFUGEES ARE NOW IN THE NOVA LISBOA AREA; ABOUT 20,000 ARE WHITES. THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION ANB THE DISTRICT GOVERNMENT AND THE RED CROSS ARE DOING THE BEST THEY CAN. SO FAR THE RED CROSS HAS SENT 40 TONS

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OF FOOD TO ANGOLA AND THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT ANOTHER 40 TONS. AN ADDITIONAL 45 TONS WILL BE COMING DOWN FROM THE RED CROSS. THE FOOD IS FLOWN FROM LISBON IN THE EMPTY PLANES USED FOR THE REFUGEE FLIGHTS. RIBEIRO ASKED FOR 500 TONS OF FOOD; WHEAT, FLOUR, RICE, SUGAR, VEGETABLE OIL, DRIED OR CANNED FISH AND DRIED BEANS. PLENTY OF MILK IS AVAILABLE HERE FROM THE RED CROSS. IF THE U.S. CAN GET THE FOOD TO LISBON THE PORTUGUESE WILL TAKE IT FROM THERE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUANDA 1077

7. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT THE USG OPEN DISCUSSIONS IMMEDIATELY WITH THE GOP TO DETERMINE IF THE PORTUGUESE DO, IN FACT, NEED AND WANT FOOD DONATIONS. I ALSO RECOMMEND THAT WE OFFER PLANES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO HELP ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE AIR LIFT.

I AM TOLD - NOT BY RIBEIRO I SHOULD ADD - THE THE GOP IS RELUCTANT TO ASK FOR HELP IN ORDER NOT TO APPEAR IMPOTENT IN THE FACE OF THE CRISIS. ANOTHER FACTOR MAY WELL BE THE RELUCTANCE OF THE MILITARY REGIME TO GO ALL OUT TO BRING BACK HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO WILL WORSEN THE ALREADY STRAITENED ECONOMIC SITUATION OF PORTUGAL AND CONSTITUTE A POLITICAL PROBLEM, AS WELL, IN THAT THEY ARE ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO THE LEFTIST POLICIES OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT.

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IN ANGOLA ITSELF, FOOD AID WOULD NOT POSE ANY PROBLEMS, AS IT

WOULD GO TO BLACKS AND WHITES ALIKE. U.S. PARTICIPATION IN AN AIRLIFT, HOWEVER, WOULD DRAW CRITICISM FROM MPLA, WHICH HAS ALREADY CASTIGATED WHITES FOR FLEEING. MPLA PRESIDENT AGOSTINHO NETO HAS LABELLED THE WHITE EXODUS A PLOT TO DESTROY THE ECONOMY. WE SHOULD AT THE VERY LEAST TALK WITH THE PORTUGUESE TO SEE IF THERE IS ANY WAY WE CAN HELP OUT IN WHAT HAS BECOME A DISASTER OF MAJOR PROPORTIONS.

8. IT IS A VAIN HOPE TO EXPECT THAT MANY OF THE WHITES WILL SOON RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AND FARMS IN THE INTERIOR. THE VICIOUSNESS OF THE FIGHTING BETWEEN FNLA AND MPLA IS SUCH THAT THE REFUGEES ARE

TERRIFIED AND MANY ARE IN SHOCK. IN MALANGE, FOR EXAMPLE, WHERE SOME WHITES TOOK UP ARMS IN SUPPORT OF FNLA, MPLA KILLED WHITES INDISCRIMINATELY. THE DEATH TOLL IS NOT KNOWN, BUT FRAGMENTARY ACCOUNTS COMING INTO THE CITY INDICATE THAT A SLAUGHTER TOOK PLACE. NO ONE HAS ANY ACCURATE INFORMATION, BUT PANIC IS SPREADING THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND ALMOST ALL WHITES WANT TO GET OUT. THE INOPERATIVE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT CAN DO NOTHING, THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY ARE TRYING THEIR BEST WITH LIMITED RESOURCES, THE RED CROSS IS NOT GEARED UP FOR A MASSIVE RELIEF EFFORT AND THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT SEEMS UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEM.

9. ACTION REQUESTED:

A. TO GET IN TOUCH WITH BOEING TO SEE IF THE PROBLEM WITH THE 747 CAN BE RESOLVED, IF ONLY ON AN AD HOC BASIS, TO ALLOW IT TO ENTER INTO SERVICE.

B. TO COMMUNICATE TO THE GOP OF THE WILLINGNESS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO HELP OUT ON THE AIRLIFT AND TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS ON WAYS AND MEANS.

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